DO NOT CIRCULATE

A STUDY OF SCHOOL FACILITIES
for
LAKE RIDGE SCHOOL CORPORATION
Gary, Indiana

by

Don Patton

Merle Strom

and

Sandra Weigle

Ball State University

Muncie, Indiana

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EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND SUPERVISION

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LAKE RIDGE COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION

GARY, INDIANA

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Introduction

In late February, 1981, Herbert F. Abramson, Superintendent of Lake Ridge School Corporation contacted Don Patton, Professor of Educational Administration and Supervision, Ball State University, with regard to a study of Lake Ridge school facilities. Such a study had been commissioned by the Lake Ridge Board of School Trustees at a meeting on February 23, 1981. Board action called for a committee of three consultants to study the problem of educational facility utilization in light of declining enrollments and economic constraints of the school corporation. The three consultants selected were Dr. Merle Strom, school facilities specialist, Sandra Weigle, doctoral fellow, and Dr. Patton, school finance specialist.

The three-member consultant team began immediately to collect data for the study. Visits by members of the consultant team to the seven school facilities were conducted on two separate dates, March 10 and March 20, 1981, respectively. In addition, a hearing was conducted in which three officers from each of the respective parent teacher organizations of the school corporation plus other interested community members were invited to present opinions coupled with other input perceived as informative to the consultant team.

Other sources of data for the study included (1) selected reports by local schools to the Indiana Department of Public Instruction; (2) memos to the School Board by Superintendent Abramson, dated January 13, February 10, and February 20, 1981 respectively; (3) a memo to the School Board submitted by

Gregory S. Reising, Attorney for the Parents of Hosford Park Elementary School, dated February 23, 1981; (4) a position paper submitted to each member of Lake Ridge Teachers Federation, Local #662, American Federation of Teachers, by the local federation Execution Board and dated February 17, 1981; plus (5) information obtained from local financial accounting and other similar records.

The report has been presented in five parts: (1) pupil enrollment considerations; (2) a brief description of each of the seven school facilities; (3) an analysis of facility utilization for elementary and junior high students; (4) financial considerations; and (5) recommendations.

Pupil Enrollment Considerations

In making decisions relative to providing physical facilities for school children and youth it is essential that school officials give careful consideration to the numbers of students to be served now and in the future. It is not possible to apply a magic formula and forecast precisely how many students there will be in a particular grade, school building, or school corporation in a given year. All that can be done is to study the school community as it has developed during the immediate past and make some assumptions as to the social, economic and political forces which will affect the immediate future. Part of such study typically involves an analysis of past enrollments in the school system and the making of projections for the future. This type of analysis has been made.

It is generally understood by the general public, as well as by educators and school officials, that pupil enrollments have been declining in most all school districts in virtually all parts of the United States. Since 1971 enrollments in Indiana have declined steadily. As would be expected, student enrollments in the Lake Ridge Schools have also declined in recent years. In fact, in 1971-72 the Lake Ridge Schools served a total of 5,986 students. By 1980-81 the total had reduced to 3,504, for a loss of 2,482 students over the nine year period.

The 1980 United States Census has just been completed. Advanced data show that Lake County had a 1970 general population total of 546,253 people. The 1980 census reports only 519,965

people in the County. A general population decrease of 26,288 persons has been experienced over the decade. It can be expected that pupil enrollments would also decline.

Table I has been prepared to present past enrollment projections for eight years. It will be noted that total enrollments from 1976-77 through 1980-81 have fallen each year. It is to be expected that continued declines will be experienced in the immediate future. The projection reflects continued decline.

Demographers assert that by 1985 or 1986 increased numbers of kindergarten and first grade pupils will begin to enroll. If a slight upturn does occur, as forcast, total elementary enrollment can be expected to increase somewhat during the later half of this decade. In the early 1990's the middle schools will begin to reflect the increase. Slight increases in high school enrollments can be expected by the mid 1990's. Exactly when, or if, increases will occur in the Lake Ridge Schools area can't be predicted precisely. The projection in Table I does include a very slight increase in entering kindergarten enrollments over the next few years.

Table II has been prepared to reflect actual enrollments by grade grouping over the past five years. The selected grade groupings reflect the pattern being considered for implementation within the Lake Ridge system. It will be noted that enrollments in all areas have declined sharply. The greatest declines have been experienced at the secondary school levels.

Table III has been prepared to show projected enrollments for the same grade groupings for the immediate years ahead. It

Table 1

Past and Projected Student Enrollments, Lake Ridge Schools, 1976-77 through 1988-89 Inclusive

YEAR	GRADES													TOTAL
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	K-12
1976-77	334	365	302	274	304	319	316	332	357	464	386	307	264	4,324
1977-78	332	350	308	266	255	300	309	320	313	411	370	314	247	4,125
1978-79	251	328	314	272	253	242	280	297	316	394	323	312	272	3,854
1979-80	284	274	288	274	252	234	240	298	294	389	347	230	284	3,688
1980-81	262	307	260	273	254	239	220	253	284	354	335	236	227	3,504
Advance-ment Ratio	104.1	188.8	.895	.933	.953	.957	102.	.967	123.2	.814	.765	.885		
1981-82	262	274	272	233	255	242	229	224	245	230	288	256	209	3,309
1982-83	264	274	243	243	217	243	232	234	217	302	285	220	227	3,201
1983-84	266	276	243	217	227	207	233	236	226	267	248	218	195	3,059
1984-85	268	279	245	217	202	216	198	237	228	278	217	190	193	2,968
1985-86	270	281	248	219	202	193	207	202	229	281	226	166	168	2,892
1986-87	272	283	249	222	204	193	185	211	195	282	229	173	147	2,845
1987-88	274	285	251	223	207	194	185	189	204	240	229	175	153	2,809
1988-89	275	287	253	224	208	197	186	189	183	251	195	175	155	2,778

Table II
Past Enrollments by Grade Groupings
1976-77 through 1980-81 Inclusive

YEAR	Grade Groupings				
	K	1 - 5	6 - 8	9 - 12	Total
1976-77	334	1,564	1,005	1,421	4,324
1977-78	332	1,479	942	1,372	4,125
1978-79	251	1,409	890	1,301	3,854
1979-80	281	1,322	832	1,250	3,688
1980-81	262	1,333	757	1,152	3,504
Decline	-72	-231	-248	-269	-820

Table III
Projected Enrollments by Grade Groupings
1981-82 through 1988-89

YEAR	Grade Groupings				
	K	1 - 5	6 - 8	9 - 12	Total K - 12
1981-82	262	1,276	698	1,103	3,339
1982-83	264	1,220	683	1,034	3,201
1983-84	266	1,170	695	928	3,059
1984-85	268	1,159	663	878	2,968
1985-86	270	1,143	638	841	2,892
1986-87	272	1,151	591	831	2,845
1987-88	274	1,160	578	797	2,809
1988-89	275	1,169	558	776	2,778

must be pointed out that these figures should be accepted as illustrative of trend continuations within the district, rather than absolutes. It is interesting to know that the high school students of 1988-89 are now enrolled in grades one through four. Pupils now enrolled in the first three grades will make up the 6-7-8 enrollment in 1985-86.

Analysis of past and projected enrollments, coupled with other relevant economic and sociologic data support the conclusions that:

1. Student enrollments in the Lake Ridge Schools have declined substantially during the past decade. There is every reason to believe that some continued declines will be experienced in the immediate years ahead.
2. It can probably be expected that slight enrollment increases will be experienced in the later part of the present decade.
3. Should some unforseen commercial or industrial development take place in the general area, and, if affordable and adequate housing were available within the Lake Ridge Schools community, the anticipated slight influx of students in the later part of the decade might be increased somewhat.
4. Secondary school enrollments, particularly at the senior high school level, can be expected to continue to decline over the next seven to ten years.

5. Future pupil enrollments are affected by many social and economic factors. School officials should have new pupil population projections made yearly. Every fall, when new enrollment figures have been completed a new projection should be made to insure more effective decision making.

Lake Ridge Educational Facilities

Public elementary and secondary school facilities in the Lake Ridge School Corporation are currently comprised of seven buildings: (1) Education Center, (2) Lake Ridge High School; (3) Lake Ridge Junior High School; (4) Virgil I. Grissom Elementary School; (5) Black Oak Elementary School; (6) Hosford Park Elementary School, and (7) Longfellow Elementary School. An eighth facility, Dulles Elementary School, was retired as a K-6 educational facility at the close of the 1976-77 academic year. Each of the seven facilities in current educational use are briefly described in the sections which follow.

The Education Center

The Education Center was converted from a junior high school in the early 1970's. The facility currently provides a central administration office complex in addition to housing adult education, special services and some leased space. The facility, as refurbished, is adequate for current usage coupled with providing centrally located storage in a portion of the facility not used for educational purposes.

Lake Ridge High School

Lake Ridge High School is located on a site adjacent to the Education Center. The original part of the building was constructed in 1956. A vocational education complex was added in 1963, a 5400 capacity field house with expansion-related facilities in 1969 and a modern attractive performing arts

complex with an 800 seat auditorium in 1978. A swimming pool addition, currently under construction, will add to the potential of the facility for accommodating a modern comprehensive high school, grades 9 - 12, for several years. In light of declining enrollments, the facility is more than adequate to accommodate contemporary enrollments.

Lake Ridge Junior High School

The Lake Ridge Junior High School is the most centrally located of the seven school buildings. Originally constructed as an elementary school in 1953, a large addition in 1969 provided a modern junior high adaptation to the existing structure. The facility currently houses students in grades 7 and 8. In excess of 20 general purpose classrooms plus special facilities for science, home economics, drafting, industrial arts, music, art, physical education, remedial reading, a modern cafeteria, library, office space, guidance facilities, health suite, and teachers' lounge complement the building for use in providing modern educational programs for early adolescents.

Virgil I. Grissom Elementary School

The Virgil I. Grissom Elementary School is a modern educational facility constructed in 1956 with an addition in 1964. The school is located on 25th Avenue, south of I-94. Regular classrooms plus two kindergarten rooms, a library, cafeteria-gymnasium and other special facilities comprise the unit. In addition to accommodating regular classroom programs in grades K-6, one room each was used for special education, a

reading laboratory, Title I instruction, and Project Smart. One kindergarten room was utilized for a half day only.

The site was quite adequate in size; however, some excessive surface water problems reportedly have occurred during past periods of heavy rainfall or thawing ice and snow. It was the understanding of the consultant team that the problem has been alleviated by opening adjacent drainage arteries.

Black Oak Elementary School

Black Oak Elementary School, located on West 29th Avenue, just north of I-94, also houses students in grades K-6. The original part of the facility was constructed in 1932. A new wing was constructed in 1971. Two kindergarten rooms plus general purpose classrooms and special facilities are available to accommodate student programs. Some classrooms in the older part of the building are smaller than in the newer part but the facility is all well maintained. The 1971 addition is an excellent facility, including classrooms, library, cafeteria-gymnasium and other special facilities.

Hosford Park Elementary School

The Hosford Park Elementary School is located on Arthur Street in the southwest part of the school corporation. The original part of the school was built in 1953, with a north wing addition in 1961 and a south wing in 1967. Two kindergarten rooms plus general purpose classrooms and special facilities are available for student programs. Two sections of kindergarten were being accommodated in one kindergarten room while the other

was used for an early prevention program. The 1953, or oldest section of the facility, is the least desirable. A basement, designed as a bomb shelter, is under the 1961 or north addition to the building.

Longfellow Elementary School

The last or seventh building to be described is the Longfellow Elementary School which also accommodates students in grades K-6. As a total facility, Longfellow is the newest facility in the school corporation. The entire building, built in 1966, provides a modern elementary education facility in every respect. The building is composed of 26 classrooms plus excellent special facilities. The 26 rooms include two kindergarten rooms, 12 self-contained rooms for grades 1 - 3 and 12 other classrooms. Several classrooms are used for special purposes at present. Longfellow is an excellent elementary facility, the benefits of which could be greatly increased by optimizing space utilization.

Summary

In summary, Lake Ridge, unlike many school corporations has no poor educational facilities. Parts of some facilities are better than others, but all seven buildings are in a good state of repair.

The high school and the junior high school are both good educational facilities with more than adequate space for the number of students enrolled. Given the present demographic characteristics of the community, little could be done to alter

the utilization of each facility short of changing the present K-6/7-8/9-12/AE organizational pattern.

The elementary schools are another matter. The four existing elementary schools could accommodate considerably more students as will be shown in the following sections of the report. In that multiple facilities exist to accommodate similar programs for the same grade levels, consolidation is a practical alternative for improving quality as well as reducing cost of educational programs. An analysis of space utilization in the context of pupil capacities is presented for each of the four elementary schools and the junior high school in the section which follows.

Facility Utilization for Elementary and Junior High Students

At the present time four elementary schools are utilized to provide educational programs and services for a total of 1,815 pupils in kindergarten through grade six inclusive. Each of the four buildings have extra space which could be utilized to serve additional students if needed. It is clear that as extra space has become available within the various buildings because of declining enrollments, excess rooms have been taken over and used for other than regular classroom activities. For example, in the Longfellow Elementary School unneeded classrooms have been assigned for use as a detention room, a room for itinerant teachers and a YMCA pre-school program. Within the Grissom Elementary School regular classrooms no longer needed for regular instructional purposes, have been assigned to accommodate a reading lab, the Title I Program and Project Smart. Identification of such special uses made of classroom spaces is not intended to be critical or to insinuate that the activities being accommodated are not defensible. The fact does remain, however, that during the late 1960's and early 1970's the school corporation was serving some 3200 elementary students. During those years virtually every possible accessible space was used for student instruction. The reduction in student enrollments has made instructional space available for other uses.

In assessing pupil capacities of currently used buildings regular classroom spaces must be considered as available for regular class group use. Tables have been prepared to illustrate

the number of pupils which could be accommodated within each of the four elementary schools. It will be noted that class groups have been computed at 25, 30 and 35 pupils per room.

As shown in Table IV, the Black Oak Elementary School could accommodate from 100 to 140 kindergarten children per day if the two kindergarten rooms were fully utilized. The 18 regular classrooms could serve from 450 to 630 elementary pupils depending upon the teacher pupil ratios utilized. The 3 special education units could serve a maximum of 45 pupils. By fully utilizing all instructional spaces, from 595 to 815 students could be served.

In the fall of 1980-81 a total of 508 students in kindergarten through grade six (K-6) were enrolled. Had only pupils in kindergarten through grade five (K-5) been enrolled the number served would have been 460. As currently organized the Black Oak Elementary School could accommodate from 87 to 207 additional pupils. As a K-5 school, from 135 to 355 additional pupils could be served.

Table IV
Pupil Capacities for Black Oak Elementary School

Type of Teaching Stations	Pupil Capacities @25	@30	@35
2 Kdg.	100	120	140
18 C.R.	450	540	630
3 Sp. Ed.	45	45	45
Total Capacity	595	705	815

Grissom Elementary School capacities are shown in Table V. It will be noted that in addition to the facilities included in the table, a room used for art and music has been left to serve

these two activities. The total capacity of the Grissom Elementary School could well range from 565 to 785 students. In the fall of 1980 a total of 472 students in kindergarten through grade six (K-6) were served. If only students in kindergarten through five (K-5) had been enrolled, the total number would have been reduced to 413. As currently organized, the Grissom school could accommodate from 93 to 313 more pupils. As a K-5 school, from 152 to 372 additional students could be served.

Table V
Pupil Capacities for Virgil I. Grissom Elementary School

Type of Teaching Station[a]	Pupil Capacities @25	@30	@35
2 Kdg.	100	120	140
18 C.R.	450	540	630
1 Sp. Ed.	15	15	15
Total Capacity	565	675	785

[a] A combination art and music room not included.

Hosford Park Elementary School capacities are shown in Table VI. It will be noted that the separate art and music rooms have not been included in the table as regular classroom teaching stations. If fully utilized the Hosford Park building could accommodate from 465 to 645 students. In the fall of 1980-81 a total of 355 pupils in kindergarten through grade six (K-6) were enrolled. If just students in kindergarten through grade five (K-5) had been served only 322 pupils would have been enrolled. As currently organized, the school could serve from 110 to 290 more pupils. As a K-5 school, from 143 to 323 more students could be accommodated.

Table VI
Pupil Capacities for Hosford Park Elementary School

Type of Teaching Station[a]	Pupil Capacities @25	@30	@35
2 Kdg.	100	120	140
14 C.R.	350	420	490
1 Sp. Ed.	15	15	15
Total Capacity	465	555	645

[a] Separate art and music room not included.

The Longfellow Elementary School pupil capacities are shown in Table VII. Separate rooms for art and music respectively are not included in the table as regular classrooms. The school could accommodate from 620 to 850 pupils if fully utilized. In the fall of 1980-81 a total of 480 pupils in kindergarten through grade six (K-6) were enrolled. If only pupils in kindergarten through grade five (K-5) had been served, 400 would have been served. As currently organized, the Longfellow building could serve from 140 to 370 additional pupils. As a K-5 school, from 220 to 450 additional students could be accommodated.

Table VII
Pupil Capacities for Longfellow Elementary School

Type of Teaching Stations[a]	Pupil Capacities @25	@30	@35
2 Kdg.	100	120	140
19 C.R.	475	570	665
3 Sp. Ed.	45	45	45
Total Capacity	620	735	850

[a] Separate rooms for art and music not included.

From the analysis just made of pupil capacities, it is obvious that the total capacity of the four elementary schools is far in excess of current and anticipated future elementary grade enrollments. Table VIII has been prepared to show building capacities, actual 1980-81 enrollments and excess capacities. Examination of Table VIII shows that from 138 to 258 additional kindergarten pupils could be accommodated in the facilities currently present in the four buildings. Should pupils in grades 1 through 6 continue to be served in the four buildings, there would be space for from 172 to 862 more students, depending upon the teacher pupil ratio utilized. At least 120 special education students could continue to be served. If only students in 1-5 were to be enrolled, additional space for from 392 to 1,092 pupils would be available.

Table VIII
Total Capacities, 1980-81 Fall Enrollments and
Excess Pupil Capacities of the four Elementary Schools

Elementary School	K	Grades 1-5 or 1-6	Special Education
Black Oak	100-140	450 - 630	45
Grissom	100-140	450 - 630	15
Hosford Park	100-140	350 - 490	15
Longfellow	100-140	475 - 665	45
Totals	400-520	1725 - 2415	120
Actual Enrollments Fall 1980-81	262	1-5 = 1333 1-6 = 1553	120+
Excess Capacity	138-258	1-5 = 392-1092 1-6 = 172- 862	

The Lake Junior High School enrolled a total of 537 students in grades seven and eight during the fall of 1980-81. Some ten years ago the school had an enrollment in excess of 900 students in the two grades. Over the years, as enrollments have declined, unneeded rooms have been assigned for other purposes. For example, at present classrooms are used for guidance, storage, a math lab and three reading rooms. If all areas were fully utilized, substantially more students could be accommodated than at present.

Table IX has been developed to show pupil capacities for the Lake Junior High School.

Table IX
Pupil Capacities for Lake Junior High School

Type of Teaching Stations	Number of Rooms [a]	Pupil Capacities @25	@30
Regular Classrooms	19	475	570
Special Rooms - 4 science-music 2 home ec.- art- shop- drafting- 2 gym	12	300	360
Total Capacity		775	930

[a] Rooms not included in totals = 2 reading - special education - 1 storage (room 109)

Attention is called to Table III in an earlier section, where projected enrollments were presented by grade groupings. Should all students in grades six through eight (6-8) of the entire district be accommodated within the Lake Junior High School, a total of approximately 700 students could be

anticipated in the Fall of 1981. The projection reflects a rather steady total enrollment for a period of three years followed by further declines. It will be remembered that the individuals who will be the sixth, seventh and eighth grade students of 1986-87 are enrolled in kindergarten and grades one and two at present. In 1986-87, 600 or fewer students could make up the student body of the three year school.

If approximately 700 students should be assigned to the Lake Junior High School, ample space would be available. Careful scheduling of pupils and staff should result in effective educational programs and services for students, and efficient utilization of instructional and service spaces.

Financial Considerations

The concept of public education as an investment in human capital has become a widely accepted principle for financial support of educational institutions. Further, securing adequate financing for public education has always been contingent upon the willingness of taxpayers to support the educational enterprise through a combination of local, state, and federal appropriations. With increased demand in the American economy for goods and services provided by the public sector, scrutiny of taxpayers with regard to the use of tax dollars has become more intense. Despite the recent general shift to a larger portion of public school financing derived from state and federal revenue sources, greater responsibility has been placed upon local school officials for accountability to local taxpaying citizens. Therefore, it has become necessary for local school officials to devote more attention to long range educational planning and to communication of educational plans to local taxpaying citizens.

The intent of this section of the report was to focus on an analysis of financial dimensions attendant to student enrollment declines and school facility utilization. Four major areas have been dealt with: (1) recent trends in local fiscal ability, (2) recent trends in state revenue, (3) recent trends in current expenditures, and (4) other selected financial ccnsiderations.

Trends in Local Fiscal Ability

Local fiscal ability for school corporations is defined as the financial capacity to operate schools. Such ability has traditionally been gauged by dividing the assessed valuation of real and personal property for the corporation by the number of students. Kindergarten students are counted as one-half because such students attend schools normally for only half days. Fiscal ability information for Lake Ridge and averages for the state of Indiana tax payment years 1977-1981, are shown in Table X. A fiscal ability index is shown for each fiscal ability measure in columns 5 and 7 respectively. During the five year period shown, the state average assessed valuation per student increased by 80.1 percent while the corresponding value for Lake Ridge increased about ten percent less, or 70.7%. Also, columns 4 and 6 respectively, show that the fiscal ability at Lake Ridge is less than half the state average.

Fiscal ability is now less meaningful than prior to 1973 for Indiana schools because the Indiana General Assembly at such time placed controls on the amount of local revenue increases for operation of schools. However, little dispute could be given to the notion that the more limited the capacity for generating local resources, the greater the impact of economic constraints. Accordingly retrenchment is often more difficult where the local economic base has been severely limited for a period of years preceding the need for such retrenchment.

Table X
Local Assessed Valuation Per Student and State Averages, 1977 through 1981

Tax Payment Year 1	Assessed Valuation 2	Fall ADM K-12[a] 3	Assessed Valuation Per ADM 4	Fiscal Ability Index 5	State asc.AV Per ADM 6	Fiscal Ability Index 7
1977	$26,262,525	4,157	$ 6,318	1.000	12,867	1.000
1978	27,012,840	3,959	6,823	1.080	13,734	1.067
1979	27,584,865	3,729	7,397	1.171	14,822	1.152
1980	34,981,430[b]	3,546	9,865	1.561	21,423	1.665
1981	36,380,685	3,373	10,786	1.707	23,172[c]	1.801

[a] Fall average daily membership (ADM) K-12 was defined as fall enrollments with kindergarten students counted as one-half because of one-half day school attendance.

[b] Large increase attributed to the reassessment of property effective for taxes payable 1980.

[c] Based on estimates derived by Division of School Finance, Indiana Department of Public Instruction.

Trends in State Revenue

A second major source of public school operating revenue is money received from state sources. Table XI has been included to show trends in state revenue received by Lake Ridge during the past four years. Data shown are for annual periods of July 1 to June 30 as opposed to a calendar year.

Table XI
State Revenues, 1976-77 through 1979-80

Year 1	Amount of State Revenue 2	State Revenue Index 3
1976-77	$3,968,281	1.000
1977-78	4,049,317	1.020
1978-79	4,553,730	1.148
1979-80	4,592,881	1.157

Modest increases in state grants to Lake Ridge have occurred during the four-year period. However, the index in column 3 of Table XI shows that, with the exception of the increase from 1977-78 to 1978-79 of about 12.8 (index of 1.020 to 1.148), state increases have been almost negligible. The small increases are largely attributable to decline in student enrollments. Such a phenomenon, coupled with a low local economic base, frozen with respect to increased local funding for the most part since 1973, exhibits well the financial dilemma of Lake Ridge and many other Indiana school districts for the early 1980's. Likelihood for improvement in state-local school financing for Indiana schools was not very promising at the time this study was conducted.

Trends in Current Expenditures

A third area for consideration in the financial analysis was trends in current operating expenditures, that is, annually recurring expenditures within the school district. The four year period, 1976-77 to 1979-80 was studied. Summary data are shown

in Table XII. The annual current expenditures shown in column 2 were divided by the K-12 average daily membership (ADM) shown in column 3 to yield the current expenditures per ADM. Such a measure, commonly referred to as local fiscal effort, was utilized to compute a fiscal effort index shown in column 5. During the four year period, school current operating expenditures per student increased from $1,234 to $1,686 or 36.6 percent. While not shown in the table, total annual expenditures increased during the same period from slightly in excess of $1400 per student to nearly $1950 per student, or over 38 percent. Total expenditures include capital expansion, principal and interest on debt plus a few other expenditures which are not included in the current expenditure category.

Table XII
Current Expenditures Per Pupil and State Averages, 1976-77 through 1979-80

Year 1	Total Current Expenditures 2	Fall ADM K-12 3	Expenditure/ADM 4	Fiscal Effort Index 5
1976-77	$5,131,602	4,157	$1,234	1.000
1977-78	5,402,227	3,959	1,365	1.106
1978-79	5,705,022	3,729	1,530	1.240
1979-80	5,978,705	3,546	1,686	1.366

By linking data from Tables X and XI to the expenditure data, it becomes clear why state and local revenues have not kept pace with operating expenditures. Also, without viable alternatives for increasing revenues, the obvious remaining choice for maintaining a financially solvent school district is to find optimal means for reducing costs, such as retrenchment.

Other Selected Financial Considerations

A final analysis was to attempt to identify unit cost information attendant to the four elementary schools. Unfortunately, many school districts, Lake Ridge included, do not maintain an accounting system which accommodates cost centers. Early in the study, it was concluded as impractical to try to break out maintenance and operation costs by building. Utilities were an exception, however. Payments for 1980 energy usage, telephone, sewage and water were sampled for the four elementary schools. The costs were combined, computed on a square foot as well as a per student ADM basis, and ranked from high to low by building. The data are shown in Table XIII.

Table XIII
Utility Costs by Elementary School Building, 1980

School	Total Utility Costs	Square Feet	Cost Per Square Foot	Rank	Fall 1980 ADM	Cost Per Student	Rank
Grissom	$43,939	32,038	$1.371	1	444	$ 98.96	2
Black Oak	42,868	51,384	0.834	3	445	93.33	3
Hosford Park	38,714	32,421	1.194	2	353	109.67	1
Longfellow	37,038	54,486	0.680	4	466	79.48	4

Large variations in total utility costs were not observed. As components, sewage and water costs at Black Oak were considerably higher than for the other three facilities. Otherwise, costs of component utilities of the aggregate were relatively comparable.

Longfellow and Black Oak were the most cost-efficient for both square footage and per pupil comparisons. Grissom showed the highest cost per square foot while Hosford Park cost the most to operate on a per pupil basis.

Savings from personnel--faculty, administration and service personnel-- are not as much a function of which buildings are closed, as a function of cutbacks contributed generally to either improved efficiency or program reduction. Accordingly, to base closing of one facility over another solely on such an analysis would be inappropriate. However, savings clearly can be achieved by consolidating programs and reducing space allocations.

As shown in column 2 of Table XIII, approximately $40,000 could have been saved in 1980 utility costs if any one of the elementary schools had been totally closed down or disposed of. Increased utility costs will inflate the figure for future applicable years.

Our final comparison, judged to be of interest, was the appraised value of four elementary school facilities for insurance purposes. The data are shown in Table XIV.

Table XIV
Insurance Values by Elementary School Buildings

School	Building Value	Contents Value	Other	Total	Rank
Grissom	$1,777,300	$ 60,650	5,000	$1,842,950	3
Black Oak	2,689,600	39,250	5,000	2,733,850	2
Hosford Park	1,635,450	53,000	5,000	1,693,450	4
Longfellow	2,783,200	106,800	5,000	2,895,000	1

Longfellow ranked as most valuable and Hosford Park at least valuable with a value difference in excess of $1.2 million. Black Oak and Grissom ranked second and third respectively.

In summary, Lake Ridge is a low wealth district. Modest state revenue increases coupled with local property tax revenue controls have contributed to Lake Ridge's becoming incapable of keeping abreast of increased spending levels for school operation. Economic justification for closing one facility over another is not strong. Utility costs on a square foot and a per pupil unit in 1980 were somewhat higher for Hosford Park than for Longfellow or Black Oak. Grissom was higher than Hosford Park on a square foot basis but lower on a per pupil basis than Hosford Park. Insurable values for the four facilities show Longfellow as most valuable and Hosford Park as least valuable.

Recommendations

A set of recommendations for the Board of Education, Lake Ridge Community School Corporation, have been generated from observations and attendant conclusions reported in the foregoing sections of this report. The task of consultation was to render an advisory service to school officials and staff. In such a role, consultants have no legal status to mandate action nor, is such desired. Rather, the recommendations represent the best professional judgement of the consultant team. The recommendations are presented for four selected areas of concern: (1) student enrollments, (2) grade level organization, (3) school attendance areas, buildings and sites, and (4) finance.

Student Enrollments

1. It is recommended that school officials provide for annual updates of student enrollment projections to maintain a constant pulse on community demographic variables and attendant pupil population trends.

Grade Level Organization

1. It is recommended that grade organization in the school corporation be changed from K-6/7-8/9-12/AE to accommodate a middle school concept for enrichment of sixth grade student programs. The new organization pattern would be K-5/6-8/9-12/AE.
2. It is recommended that school officials begin immediately to plan an in-service education program for teachers of the middle school. Uniqueness of sixth grade students in

an early adolescent social mix with students in grades seven and eight has tremendous potential for program enrichment if such potential is unleashed and accommodated. Efforts to unify and coordinate philosophies and goals should pay long range dividends in the form of a dynamic early adolescent educational environment.

School Attendance Areas, Buildings, and Sites

1. It is recommended that Hosford Park Elementary School be retired from educational use, effective end of 1980-81 school year. To realize optimum cost savings from such action, the facility should be sold, leased or otherwise removed from school corporation responsibility as soon as possible after June, 1981.
2. Consideration should be given to changing the attendance boundaries by having K-5 students in (1) the area enclosed by 29th, Clark Street, Riverside Drive, and Chase Street and (2) the small area immediately north between 29th and 25th attend either Black Oak or Grissom as space in the respective facilities can best be utilized.
3. All sixth grade students, effective fall, 1981, should be transferred to the newly adapted middle school.
4. Students in grades K-5, currently in the attendance area served by Hosford Park Elementary School, should be transferred to Longfellow Elementary School, except as boundaries are changed to accommodate recommendation number two above.

5. Special education students currently accommodated in classrooms of Hosford Park and Longfellow respectively, could be accommodated in surplus classrooms of Grissom and Black Oak which result from sixth grade removals to the newly adapted middle school.

Finance

Savings from the recommendations above will be derived both directly and indirectly. Direct savings can be expected from (1) elimination of operating costs attendant to Hosford Park; (2) salary savings by achieving more optimal teacher-pupil ratios attendant to consolidation of elementary educational programs; and (3) improved utilization of all staff personnel in the newly adapted middle school. Indirect savings accrue by reduction of the number of facilities, (total square footage) and spreading all centralized services across a more concentrated pupil population.

To realize optimal savings, therefore, it is recommended that:

1. Maximum reductions in certificated staff be achieved effective fall, 1981, by (a) non-replacements of retiring personnel except in areas where curricular specilizations dictate such, and (b) reduction or reassignment of certified staff wherever possible without destroying or reducing educational program effectiveness.
2. Maximum reductions in non-certified staff be achieved through attrition, reassignment and dismissal. Included will be custodial, clerical, and possibly some instructional aides.